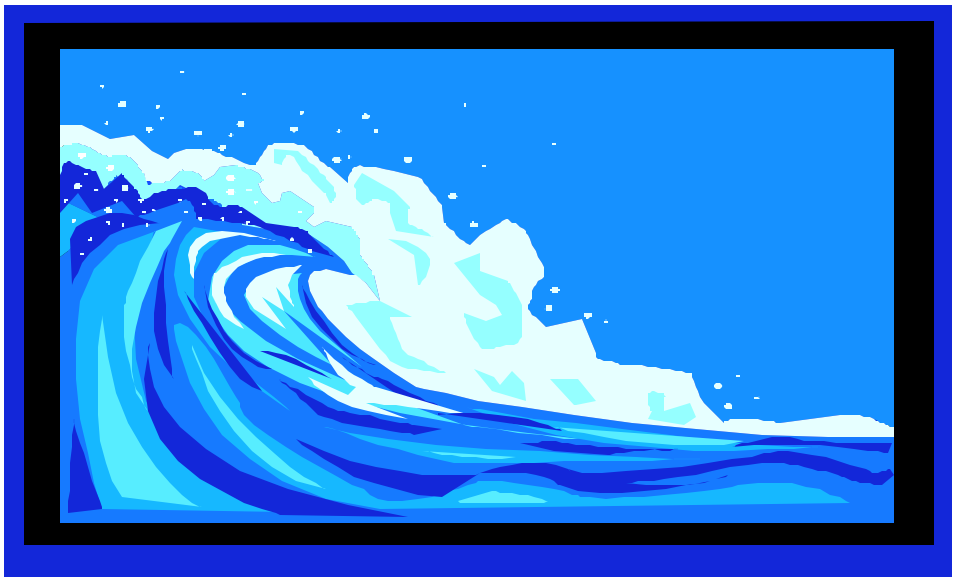

Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy

First Edition

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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Introduction

To teach all students, we must teach each student.
(Kame'enui, 2002)

The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Legislature place a major emphasis on the critical importance of literacy proficiency for all students. This commitment, on the part of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and the State of Rhode Island, requires districts to focus intensely on PreK-12 Literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In order to ensure alignment with Grade Level Expectations (GLEs), Grade Level Spans (GSEs), and research based practices, all districts need to conduct an analysis of their present curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The 2005 PreK-12 Rhode Island Literacy Policy serves to expand and revise the original K-3 Rhode Island Reading Policy first published in February 2000 and legislated in the Rhode Island Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act of 1987 (Title 16, Chapter 16-67-1). Since the Rhode Island Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act of 1987 includes mathematics skills within its definition of literacy, a section on mathematical literacy has been added to this policy. The 2000 K-3 Rhode Island Reading Policy was an initial attempt to define "good" reading instruction and assessment which included:

- Ability to flexibly apply language cues – syntactic, semantic, and grapho-phonemic – in constructing and making meaning
- Ability to apply decoding skills fluently, rapidly, and automatically
- Ability to apply the alphabetic principle to decoding of words
- Ability to use active, flexible strategies for comprehending text; as well as, the motivation to read
- Skills, knowledge, and awareness about the written alphabet to understand how the phonemes or speech sounds are connected to print
- Knowledge, experiences, and vocabulary to make connections to text
- A deep understanding of and familiarity with the English language

The development of this 2005 PreK-12 Rhode Island Literacy Policy reflects confirmed scientific research about literacy development, intervention, and the prevention of reading difficulties: confirmed research about how students best develop literacy and how successful programs work to ensure that virtually every student attains proficiency. This policy calls for instruction that is designed to meet individual student needs by being accessible, flexible, and engaging. This instruction incorporates strategies, methods, and resources that ensure literacy success for all. A comprehensive approach to literacy includes:

- Explicit and systematic instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary skills
- Strong literature, language, and comprehension instruction that includes a balance of oral and written language

- On-going assessment that informs teaching and ensures accountability
- Proven intervention programs which provide support for students at-risk of failing to learn to read

In addition, the purpose of this policy has been broadened beyond the primary years to include a focus on literacy acquisition through grade 12. The belief that students need literacy instruction only in the early grades is being reshaped by the research that literacy learning is an on-going process. It is during the middle and high school years that most students refine and rethink their reading preferences. They become increasingly more sophisticated readers of informational text and establish their own foundation for lifelong reading habits.

This 2005 PreK-12 Rhode Island Literacy Policy provides the foundation and serves to unify all state literacy reform initiatives. These initiatives are in response to the findings of the National Reading Panel (April, 2000) and the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, and include, but are not limited to:

- Literacy Section 4.0 of the *Regulations Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School*, 2003
- New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) for Grades 3-8
- Rhode Island Local & State Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in Grades K-8
- Rhode Island Local & State Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) in Grades 9-12
- Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs) (RI General Law 16-7.1-2)
- WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12

Inherent in this literacy policy is the assumption that the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will be the foundation for teaching, learning, assessment, and curriculum development. "The central practical premise of UDL is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The 'universal' in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone. Rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each learner and the need to accommodate differences, creating learning experiences that suit the learner to maximize his or her ability to progress" (www.cast.org/udl). Mere access to materials and information does not equate to access in learning for all.

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recognizes that curricula decisions are local decisions based on communities' needs and priorities. All Rhode Island school districts are expected to utilize this 2005 PreK-12 Rhode Island Literacy Policy to serve as the foundation for their literacy efforts, to use proven practices, and to maintain congruence among and across curriculum, instruction, and

assessment. In addition, institutions of higher education involved in teacher preparation are expected to use this policy to inform and augment course and program decisions at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As a result, this policy will have an impact on the pre-service and in-service training of all teachers educated and/or employed in the state of Rhode Island.

Essential Understandings of Literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, speak, and listen to communicate with others effectively. Literacy is also the ability to think and respond critically. The Rhode Island Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act of 1987 (Title 16, Chapter 16-67-1) defines the skills of literacy as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematic skills. This definition of literacy expands to include the ability to use reading, writing, and mathematics effectively to learn subject matter and the capacity to process complex information across content areas. Therefore, the fundamental responsibility of our schools is to provide each student with the instruction needed to become literate members of society. "In this age of information literacy, our students will become adults in a working world that expects them to be capable problem solvers, collaborative decision-makers, and creative communicators operating in a communication age where information is available at their fingertips" (Benson, 2003). Thus, students need to move beyond basic literacy to become language users who are critical and creative thinkers and able to enrich their own lives and function in a changing world.

It is critical for all educators to understand each of the essential elements of literacy and incorporate them into a comprehensive literacy framework. In actuality the strategies and skills of effective reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics need to be interrelated. They are best taught and learned through an integrated approach within meaningful contexts.

Foundations of Literacy

Literacy is inherent in all individuals. The foundations for literacy begin developing at birth. Even in the first few months of life, children begin to experiment with language, making sounds, and imitating tones. Children learn to use symbols, combining their oral language, pictures, print, and play into a means of communication. The language and cognitive development of the preschool years has an impact on their ultimate literacy development. Preschoolers delight in listening to rhymes and using various forms of literacy in their play. Literacy instruction begins well before students enter school. Therefore, children who are exposed to a rich variety of language and literacy experiences at home and in early childhood programs will be more likely to enter school with the skills needed to be successful.

Writing

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes that are mutually supportive. Reading improves writing, and vice versa (Gunning, 2003). The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework, *Literacy for All Students* (1996) defined writing process as the various aspects of the recursive act of creating a written piece, including planning (in a variety of ways), drafting or composing, revising, editing, and publishing. Writing is a series of activities involving reading, rereading, writing, and rewriting. With increased attention on writing, educators have focused on the nature of writing process and in particular, on the wide variety of higher-order skills from which writers draw in any act of writing. These

higher-order skills include planning, thinking, categorizing, choosing, organizing, and using language to deliver an intended message.

"Writing facilitates learning by helping students explore, clarify, and think deeply about the ideas and concepts they encounter in reading…when reading and writing are taught in tandem, the union influences content learning in ways not possible when students read without writing or write without reading" (Vacca & Vacca, 2003). Integrating reading and writing helps students use writing to think about what they will read and to understand what they have read. Students who experience this integration of reading and writing are likely to learn more content, to understand it better, and to remember it longer.

"The roots of writing go deep and begin their growth early. Writing evolves from the pre-speech gestures children make and from the language they hear and later use" (Gunning, 2003). Children discover pictures and words in storybooks that are read aloud to them. They begin to scribble, and in time, these scribbles take on meaning. Ultimately, children discover that not only can they draw pictures of people and objects, but they also can represent people and objects with words (Gunning, 2003).

Primary writers, not yet bound by convention, find their own inventive ways to fill a page. The writing of the very young reflects both their creative individuality and an uncanny ability to observe the world around them (Spandel, 2001). It is important to see the strengths of the writer and to believe in the writer's capability as teachers instruct them in writing process.

Writing development generally follows these stages:

- **Random Scribbling**
- **Pictorial**: *Drawing is not an illustration for a story, but is the story itself*
- **Scribbling:** *Resembles a line of writing; may have the appearance of a series of waves*
- **Letter-like Forms** : *Resembles manuscript or cursive letters; are not real letters*
- **Prephonemic**: *Writes using letters; however these letters are usually a random collection, or repetition of the same letter*
- **Semiphonetic**: *Begins to use some letters to match sounds*
- **Phonetic**: *Writes most words using beginning and ending consonant sounds and spells some words correctly*
- **Transitional**: *Words are written the way they sound, representing most syllables in words*
- **Conventional**: *Most words are spelled correctly*

(Feldgus & Cadonick, 1999; Sulzby, 1989; Gunning, 2003)

Students grasp English spelling patterns and principles at different rates within their writing. When students are presented with spelling words they are not ready to learn, spelling becomes a matter of memorization rather than concept development. This

occurs when students know a word on Friday and forget it by Monday. There is a wide range of spelling achievement among students. By adapting instruction to student's stages of development, teachers can support literacy development. Samples from daily writing activities are a good starting point for assessing knowledge of spelling rules and patterns.

Gentry (1982, 2000) defines the following stages of spelling:

1. *PRECOMMUNICATIVE SPELLERS* are at the "babbling" stage of spelling. The letters are strung together randomly; they do not correspond to sounds (e.g., OPSPS = eagle; RTAT = eighty).

2. *SEMIPHONETIC SPELLERS* know that letters represent sounds. They perceive and represent reliable sounds with letters in a type of telegraphic writing. Spellings are often abbreviated representing initial and/or final sound (i.e. E = eagle; a = eighty).

3. *PHONETIC SPELLERS* spell words like they sound. The speller perceives and represents all of the phonemes in a word, though spellings may be unconventional (i.e. EGL = eagle; ATE = eighty).

4. *TRANSITIONAL SPELLERS* think about how words appear visually; a visual memory of spelling patterns is apparent. Spellings exhibit conventions of English orthography like vowels in every syllable, e-marker and vowel digraph patterns, correctly spelled inflectional endings, and frequent English letter sequences (i.e. EGIL = eagle; EIGHTEE = eighty).

5. *CONVENTIONAL SPELLERS* develop over years of word study and writing. (i.e. fourth grade has words that proficient students at that specific grade level should be able to spell independently).

Whether students are drawing, scribbling, using phonetic writing, or entering into the transitional or conventional phases, they should be encouraged to write. Students progress through the stages when given daily opportunities for guided and independent writing.

The goal of effective writing instruction is for students to become fluent writers that engage in writing process and are able to write with purpose and increasing confidence for a variety of audiences. Learning to write effectively is multi-dimensional: purpose, focus, organization, elaboration, voice, and convention.

Elements of Effective Writing Instruction Across Grades and Contents

- Teachers build an environment that supports and encourages writing. Students need to write regularly.

- Teachers' provide/allow students to use a variety of writing materials including technology. Teachers provide assistance to students in integrating technology to support writing and publishing.

- Teachers are facilitators of student learning and set clear expectations for writing. Students are carefully and purposefully taught to take responsibility for their own writing. Teachers know that the students own their own writing.

- Teachers model writing behaviors. Teachers model content area writing and share their writing and revision processes with their students.

- Teachers talk about writing. Teachers confer and talk with their students about content area writing that models the behavior and questions teachers hope will occur when students talk with each other about their writing. Conference questions are open-ended. They also listen to their students discuss their writing since much can be learned about a writer that way.

- Teachers evaluate and document student growth over time. Teachers establish clear criteria for evaluation. They explore and explain areas of success, progress, and concern. Folders/portfolios of student writing are maintained. Their judgments are based on accumulated work in student folders/portfolios.

- Teachers provide opportunities for students to share their writing with a real audience. Teachers provide student writers with options for sharing their writing in such places as school magazines or newspapers, classroom "published" books, with classmates during sharing times, and/or on bulletin boards.

(Adapted from: *Rhode Island State Assessment Program 2004: Writing Assessment Guide To Interpretation*)

Writing fulfills many purposes in our everyday lives, both in and out of school. Students must write to communicate, to organize thoughts, to make sense of new knowledge, to express, and to remember and show learning.

As students move towards high school graduation by the demonstration of proficiency, they must have multiple opportunities for content area writing. Writing across the curricula is the *application* of content area writing with multiple purposes. Writing to demonstrate learning becomes of foremost importance to students. Content area writing/writing across the curricula "has come to mean drawing upon writing as a resource for skill building and for learning" (Winchell & Elder, 1992). When including

writing in content subjects, it is vital to remember that content should be kept at the center of writing process (Tchudi & Yates, 1983).

While writing in every subject helps students learn the subject's content, differences do exist. Each content area has its own specialized vocabulary. Audiences, purposes, and forms of writing vary from subject to subject. The following forms are outlined in the *Written Communication Grade Level Expectations* (GLEs) and *Grade Span Expectations* (GSEs):

Expressive Writing	**Narrative**: telling a story or recounting an event
	Reflective Essay: exploring and sharing the meaning of a experience, personal belief or idea
	Poetry
Informational Writing	**Report**: Gathering, investigating, and organizing facts on a focused topic
	Procedural: Explaining a process
	Persuasive: Convincing people to accept a point of view
Reading-Writing Connection	**Response to Literary Text**
	Response to Informational Text

Written Expression/Communication
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skills***
▪ Understand that composition is a recursive process of planning, drafting, and revising. ▪ Know the value and purpose of teacher-directed and student-directed assignments. ▪ Understand the role of grammar, sentence composition, and paragraphing in building composition skill(s). ▪ Know benchmarks and standards for students at various stages of growth. ▪ Understand that different kinds of writing require different organizational approaches. ▪ Understand the value of meaningful writing for an authentic and specific audience and purpose.	▪ Organize writing process to support planning, drafting, and revising stages before publication(s). ▪ Include writing daily as part of the classroom routine, employing a variety of authentic tasks and modes. ▪ Teach sentence and paragraph awareness, construction, and manipulation as a tool for fluent communication of ideas. ▪ Generate and use rubrics to guide and evaluate student work. ▪ Teach several genres through the year, such as narrative, reflective essay, poetry, report, procedural, and persuasive.

Refer to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs), both local and state for further identification of the knowledge and skills required for WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (W-1; W-2; W-3; W-4; W-5; W-6; W-7; W-8; W-9; W-10; W-11; W-12; W-13).

Speaking and Listening

Oral communication, both expressive and receptive language, is the cornerstone for literacy development and forms the foundation for reading and writing success. All of the elements of literacy are dependent on the strength of the basic language skills a student brings to the process (Bickart, 1998; Snow et al., 1998). All students need explicit and systematic instruction in understanding and using communication skills.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards emphasize the importance of purposefully planned instruction and experiences that engage our youngest students in a literacy rich environment. This environment fosters language development, natural exposure to books and print, and opportunities for social interactions. Preschool and kindergarten instruction must build knowledge of phonemic awareness, which is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words (*Put Reading First*, 2001). This instruction must also build awareness of the alphabetic principle. Liberman, Shankweiler, and Liberman (1989) discuss evidence asserting that proper application of the alphabetic principle rests on an awareness of the internal phonological structure of words that the alphabet represents.

All students benefit from experiences that expand their language skills and develop their vocabulary. Language develops through socialization and collaboration. Vygotsky (1978) viewed learning as integrated and socially based. His theory played a role in guiding current research. Classroom language and literacy learning include the following:

- Learning is a social activity: interpersonal behaviors are the basis for new conceptual understandings.
- Learning is integrated: strong interrelationships exist between oral and written language learning.
- Learning requires student interaction and engagement in classroom activities: engaged students are motivated to learn and have the best chance of achieving full communicative competence across the broad spectrum of language and literacy skills.

These experiences support and encourage the development of literacy; therefore, students must have significant opportunities to integrate oral and written language in the classroom.

Research indicates that both elementary and secondary readers' knowledge of oral-written language relationship is enriched when students participate in:

- peer conversations, and
- student-dominated class discussion.

Secondary students also benefit from learning different ways to interpret literary texts. Almasi & Gambre (1994); Alvermann (1999); Langer (1990) believe that secondary school students' interpretations of books are best enriched when they are supported in discussions that include *real* questions about books and have been modeled by knowledgeable teachers.

Listening is an important life skill that students can use beyond the academics of the classroom. Active listening is one tool that educators can use to improve thinking and learning in both school and life. It is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speaker. Educators are encouraged to implement more discussion-based activities, such as debating, questioning, clarifying, and elaborating. These activities employ instructional conversations to varying degrees and assist students in developing effective strategies for comprehension and expression as tools of inquiry. Purposeful talk about a topic, also known as *accountable talk*, can occur only if students listen to one another (Resnick et al., 2001).

Teachers need to create student-centered classroom and adopt the instructional principles that Hynd (1999) suggested:

- Tasks for group discussion are open-ended and subject to multiple interpretations
- Discussion groups are friendly and motivated by the topic
- Motivation for students includes using their own ideas for topics of discussion

- Guided discussions led by teachers or students with specific focuses of discussions facilitated by teachers
- Opportunities for secondary learners to self-evaluate their work

Refer to the local Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for further identification of the knowledge and skills required for ORAL COMMUNICATION (OC-1; OC-2).

Mathematics

"All young Americans must learn to think mathematically, and they must think mathematically to learn." (*Adding it UP*, 2001). Students must understand the mathematics they are learning. "Mathematics…has many types and levels of representation [e.g. graphs, pictures, signs, numerals]. In fact, mathematics can be said to be *about* levels of representation, which build on one another as the mathematical ideas become more abstract" (Kilpatrick, Swafford, & Findell, 2001). Joan Richards (2001) states, "…when teaching mathematics, it is seen as a way of teaching people how to think, it can no longer be isolated. Its implications spread throughout the curriculum and it has a place in every class." Therefore, all teachers are teachers of mathematics.

Mathematics plays an integral role in the evolution of science, technology, engineering, business, and government. "The mathematics students need to learn today is not the same mathematics that their parents and grandparents needed to learn. When today's students become adults, they will face new demands for mathematical proficiency that school mathematics should attempt to anticipate. Moreover, mathematics is a realm no longer restricted to a select few" (*Adding It UP*, 2001).

Students bring specific understandings and experiences to each situation they encounter. It is the role of the teacher to nurture and develop each student's understandings and skills to learn mathematics. Fuson, Kalchman, and Bransford (2005), assert when teaching for student understanding, the application of three principles enables teachers to design learning environments conducive to students knowing and applying mathematics concepts and skills. These principles are:

Principle # 1: Teachers Must Engage Students' Preconceptions

- Allows students to use their own informal problem-solving strategies, at least initially, and then build their mathematical thinking toward more effective strategies and advanced understandings
- Encourages math talk so that students can clarify their strategies to themselves and others, and compare the benefits and limitations of alternate approaches
- Designs instructional activities that can effectively bridge commonly held conceptions and targeted mathematical understandings

Principle # 2: Understanding Requires Factual Knowledge and Conceptual Frameworks

- Acknowledges the necessity for both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency.

- Enables students to extend their preconceptions and existing knowledge by learning from concrete examples to abstract representations
- Condenses the amount of concrete knowledge needed as abstract concepts are understood

Principle # 3: A Metacognitive Approach Enables Student Self-Monitoring

- Supports the need for students to see themselves as thinkers, learners, and problem solvers
- Provides students with opportunities to reflect upon their thinking and their solutions to problems
- Enables students to acquire a deeper understanding of the concepts and procedures that may not be gained when information is imparted to them through analysis of solutions

(Adapted from: *Mathematical Understanding: An Introduction*, 2005)

In accordance with *Section 5.0 Graduation Requirements* of the *Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School*, all students upon graduation will be mathematically proficient. *Adding It UP* (2001), defines mathematical proficiency as:

- *Conceptual understanding*: of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations
- *Procedural fluency*: skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately
- *Strategic competence*: ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems
- *Adaptive reasoning*: capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification
- *Productive disposition*: habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy

In the development of mathematical proficiency, these components are not independent of one another but rather they are interwoven. These five components provide a framework for discussing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and beliefs that constitute mathematical proficiency. "Mathematical proficiency is not a one-dimensional trait, and it cannot be achieved by focusing on just one or two of these components" (Kilpatrick, Swafford, & Findell, 2001).

Beginning in kindergarten, all students should become increasingly proficient in mathematics, which will enable them to cope with the mathematical challenges of daily life and enable them to be life long learners. "Learning with understanding is more powerful than simply memorizing because [it] improves retention, promotes fluency, and facilitates learning related material. The central notion that [the components] of competence must be interwoven to be useful reflects the finding that having a deep understanding requires that learners connect pieces of knowledge, and that connection in

turn is a key factor in whether they can use what they know productively in solving problems" (*Adding it UP*, 2001).

Refer to The Rhode Island's Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM), Adding It Up, and How Students Learn for more detailed information.

The Process of Reading

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recognizes that reading is acquired through a complex process. This process requires knowledge of the written alphabet and the sound structure of oral language. Furthermore, prior knowledge and experience that a reader brings to the text impacts the meaning gained from the printed page. Teachers need the following knowledge:

- Understand reading as the process of constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of reading.
- Understand the relationships among reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Know the kinds of experiences that support literacy.
- Understand that reading develops best through activities that embrace concepts about the purpose and function of reading, writing, and conventions of print.
- Understand the role of models of thought that operate in the reading process.
- Understand the role of metacognition in reading.
- Understand the nature and multiple causes of reading disabilities.
- Understand the relationship of phonemic, morphemic, semantic, and syntactic systems of language to the reading process.
- Understand the importance of aligning assessment with curriculum and instruction.
- Understand the importance of student motivation.
- Understand the use of assessments as an ongoing and indispensable part of reflective teaching and learning.

(Adapted from: *Report of the National Reading Panel, 2000*)

"Teachers need constantly to remind themselves that reading is always a particular event involving a particular reader at a particular time under particular circumstances" (Rosenblatt, 1991).

Successful readers develop over time through a continuous process, as outlined in the stages of reading. They move from initial understanding to analysis and interpretation of text. This reading development continues to grow both through explicit and systematic instruction in all areas of reading, as well as through extensive reading opportunities.

These stages of reading development are not linear. The emphasis at the various stages is dynamic, flexible, and dependent on student strengths and needs. It is important to note that reading growth relies on explicit and systematic instruction, scaffolding techniques, and guided and independent practice. These are the vehicles through which reading progress is assured. Understanding the acquisition of skills, coupled with the characteristics of the various stages, provides the knowledge of the instruction needed for continual growth. Teachers must continually monitor reading progress through both formal and informal assessment.

The Stages of Reading Development

LEARNING TO READ*

- ***Emergent*** *(commonly found from birth through grade 1)*
  - Pretends to read
  - Demonstrates awareness of print
  - Demonstrates awareness that print carries a message and must make sense
  - Demonstrates awareness that one spoken word matches one printed word
  - Recognizes names, some letters, and some high-frequency words
  - Begins to apply letter/sound relationships
  - Uses information from pictures
  - Begins to read signs and labels
  - Enjoys both narrative and expository (informational) text

- ***Early Reading*** *(commonly found in grades 1-2)*
  - Demonstrates awareness of the concept that letters represent sounds so that words may be read by saying the sounds represented by the letters
  - Uses knowledge of letter sounds, together with meaning and structure of language to read words
  - Activates background knowledge and experience to assist in making meaning
  - Reads fluently, using punctuation to guide phrasing
  - Recognizes the majority of easy high-frequency words
  - Begins to read both narrative and expository (informational) text

- ***Transitional*** *(commonly found in grades 2-3)*
  - Develops a significant foundation of automatically recognizable words
  - Integrates multiple sources of information: letter/sound relationships, meaning, structure of language
  - Applies a variety of problem-solving strategies to read words and understand text
  - Begins to read easy chapter books, as well as different genres with some fluency and ease

READING TO LEARN*

Intermediate *(commonly found from grade 3 through 6 and beyond)*
- Sustains silent reading over longer texts
- Reads texts to enhance meaning and gain information
- Demonstrates awareness of the expectation that different genre require different approaches to reading
- Develops a significant vocabulary base
- Develops a process for building a conceptual foundation through personal experiences and the need to bring that knowledge to their reading

- ***Advanced*** *(commonly found from grade 6 and beyond)*
  - Reads varied texts for many purposes
  - Constructs meaning and selects strategies that work for the genre, type of text, and purpose for reading
  - Acquires new vocabulary through experiences with text
  - Makes connections between texts, experiences, and knowledge of the world at large
  - Extends beyond the text to interpret, analyze, synthesize, and formulate judgments
  - Applies new knowledge acquired through reading to other areas
  - Sustains interest and understanding over longer texts and over extended periods of time

*Alexander (2002) maintains that the process of *learning to read* and *reading to learn* are inextricably tied together. As students begin to unravel the mysteries of language, they are simultaneously building their knowledge base. Similarly, as students pursue knowledge and reading in other domains, they are building a deeper and richer understanding of language.

Proficient Readers

Proficient readers are strategic and actively construct meaning as they read. The following illustrates characteristics of proficient readers:

Before Reading	**During Reading**	**After Reading**

▪ approach reading tasks confidently
▪ activate their background knowledge
▪ connect background knowledge to new learning
▪ know their purpose for reading
▪ make predictions and choose appropriate strategies
▪ set relevant, attainable goals
	▪ focus their complete attention on reading
	▪ are able to read independently
	▪ possess an extensive vocabulary
	▪ use appropriate decoding/word attack skills
	▪ read fluently
	▪ monitor their comprehension
	  ▪ use text structure
	  ▪ adjust rate according to purpose
	  ▪ read to learn; anticipate and predict
	  ▪ persevere with unfamiliar passage
	  ▪ organize/integrate
		▪ reflect on what they have read and add new information to their knowledge base
		▪ summarize major ideas and recall supporting details, make inferences, draw conclusions, paraphrase
		▪ seek additional information from outside sources
		▪ feel success is a result of effort
		▪ can independently gain information
		▪ express opinions about or pleasure in selections they have

	new information by searching for main idea, inferring, synthesizing, etc. ▪ raise relevant questions ▪ create visual and sensory images ▪ use fix-up strategies when they don't understand ▪ strive to understand new terms ▪ use context clues	read ▪ choose reading for the sheer joy of it

(Adapted from: Irvin, Buehl, & Klemp, 2003)

Proficient readers have learned that "…'meaning' does not reside ready-made 'in' their text or 'in' the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text" (Rosenblatt, 2005). The complexity of the text and students' interactions with a particular text influence their understanding of the written word. Proficient readers are self-motivated and self-directed (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1994). They monitor their own comprehension. Research has demonstrated that proficient readers display these key characteristics:

- strategic in monitoring the interactive processes that assist comprehension;
- set goals that shape reading processes;
- monitor their emerging understanding of a text;
- coordinate a variety of comprehension strategies;
- mental engagement;
- motivated to read and to learn; and
- socially active around reading tasks.

(Baumann & Duffy, 1997)

Five Essential Areas of Reading Instruction

In the past, much attention has been focused on primary and elementary reading instruction. "But many excellent third-grade readers will falter or fail in later-grade academic tasks if the teaching of reading is neglected in middle and secondary grades" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Acquiring literacy competencies is an on-going process that continues to develop throughout life. As literacy demands increase and shift, "students must convert their third grade reading skills into literacy levels useful for comprehending and learning from content rich materials" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

The National Reading Panel (2000) has concluded that there are no easy answers or quick solutions for optimizing reading achievement. There now exists an extensive knowledge base, which articulates the skills students must learn in order to read well. These skills provide the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches for all students. Scientific evidence builds a foundation for effective instructional practice.

Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) is research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties, as well as to reading assessment.

(Adapted from: *The Reading First Guidance*, 2002)

Implementation of explicit instruction grounded in SBRR requires that teachers working with students understand:

- the science of learning to read;
- how students acquire reading skills;
- how the brain processes first and second language acquisition;
- how the brain functions in students who encounter no difficulty in learning to read; and,
- how the brain functions in students who experience considerable difficulty in learning to read.

  (Snow et al., 1998; Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000; Fletcher & Lyon, 1998; Shaywitz, 2003).

"Good reading instruction utilizes research-based instructional strategies and skills that include the five critical components of reading as defined in the National Reading Panel's report" (*Reading: The Foundation Children Need to Succeed: For Policy Makers, The Partnership for Reading*, 2003).

These five essential areas of reading instruction are:

- **Phonemic Awareness**
- **Phonics**
- **Fluency**
- **Vocabulary**
- **Text Comprehension**

Phonemic Awareness

Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes phonemic awareness. In addition to phonemes, phonological awareness activities can involve work with rhymes, words, syllables, and onsets and rimes (Rhode Island Reading First Application, *The "Rhode" to Reading Achievement*, 2003).

"Research clearly shows that phonemic awareness can be developed through instruction and furthermore that doing so significantly accelerates children's subsequent reading and writing achievement" (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Blachman et al., 1994; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1991, 1993, 1995; Castle, Riach, & Nicholson, 1994; Cunningham, 1990; Lundberg et al., 1988; Wallach & Wallach, 1979; Williams, 1980).

Phonemic awareness is
the ability to notice, think about, and work with individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language.

(Rhode Island Reading First Application,
The "Rhode" to Reading Achievement, 2003)

Before students learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They need to understand that words are made up of speech sounds or phonemes. Effective phonemic awareness instruction teaches students to notice, think about, and manipulate sounds in spoken language. Many instructional practices build phonemic awareness:

1. ***Phoneme Isolation*:** to isolate and recognize individual sound
   For example: the last sound in ball is /l/

2. ***Phoneme Identity*:** to recognize the same sound in individual words
   For example: the first sound in top, toe, turn is /t/

3. ***Phoneme Categorization*:** to recognize the word with the "odd" sound in a sequence of three or four words
   For example: mat, man, tag - tag begins with a different sound

4. ***Phoneme Blending*:** to process discrete sounds into recognizable words

For example: blend /c/ /a/ /t/ into one known word, "cat"

5. ***Phoneme Segmentation*:** to break a word into its separate sounds
   For example: segment "bike" into three distinct sounds /b/ /i/ /k/

6. ***Phoneme Deletion*:** to recognize the part that remains when a phoneme is removed
   For example: "land" without the /l/ becomes "and"

7. ***Phoneme Addition*:** to make a new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word
   For example: "pot" with the /s/ sound added at the beginning becomes "spot"

8. ***Phoneme Substitution*:** to **s**ubstitute one phoneme for another in order to make a new word
   For example: replace the /t/ in "cat" with /n/ to form "can"

Phonemic awareness instruction is beneficial for preschoolers, kindergarteners, and first graders who are just starting to read. Blending and segmenting are the two areas of phonemic awareness instruction that have the most impact on students learning to read. This is especially true for older and/or less proficient readers (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). The National Reading Panel found that "the best approach is for teachers to assess students' phonemic awareness before beginning phonemic awareness instruction. This will indicate which children need the instruction and which do not, which children need to be taught rudimentary levels of phonemic awareness [e.g., segmenting initial sounds in words], and which children need more advanced levels involving segmenting or blending with letters" (National Reading Panel, 2000). In general, small group phonemic awareness instruction may be more beneficial than whole class or individual instruction because students often benefit from listening to their classmates respond and receive feedback from the teacher (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

Research has also demonstrated a very "close relationship between phonemic awareness and reading ability" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Phonemic awareness is critical because if students cannot perceive sounds in spoken words, then they will later have difficulty decoding and encoding (spelling) the printed word. For example, if they cannot perceive that the /i//g/ sound in big and wig are the same and recognize that the difference lies in the first sound, then they will have difficulty decoding ("sounding out") words in a fast, automatic manner. As a result, these students will have difficulty learning phonics and spelling.

Phonemic Awareness and Concepts of Print
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	*Teacher Skills*
▪ Know the speech sounds in English (consonants and vowels) and the pronunciation of phonemes for instruction. ▪ Know the progression of development of phonological skill. ▪ Understand the causal links between early decoding, spelling, word knowledge, and phoneme awareness. ▪ Understand the print concepts all students must develop. ▪ Understand how critical the foundation skills are for later reading success.	▪ Select and use a range of activities representing a developmental progression of phonological skill (rhyming; word identification; syllable counting; onset-rime segmentation and blending; phoneme identification, segmentation, and blending). ▪ Plan lessons in which phoneme awareness, letter knowledge, and invented spelling activities are complementary. ▪ Teach concepts of print during shared reading. ▪ Have ability to monitor every student's progress and identify those who are falling behind.

Refer to the local Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for further identification of reading content knowledge and skills regarding PHONEMIC AWARENESS (R -9).

Phonics

Phonological awareness instruction is effective when combined with letter training as part of a total literacy program (Blachman et al., 2000). Once letters are introduced into the process, instruction moves from phonological awareness to phonics**.** Elkonian boxes and interactive writing are some examples of instructional activities that combine the use of letters and sounds.

Phonics is
the relationship between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language.

(Put Reading First, 2001)

Systematic phonics instruction continues a sequential program of word study, which gives students opportunities to apply knowledge of letters and words in a purposeful manner. The primary focus of systematic and explicit phonics instruction is to help beginning readers and/or older, less proficient readers understand how written symbols (graphemes – most commonly known as "letters") are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences. Effective phonics instruction provides ample

opportunities for children to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories (*Put Reading First*, 2001). Phonics instruction is effective when it is:

- Systematic: the plan of instruction includes a carefully selected set of letter-sound relationships that are organized into a logical sequence

- Explicit: the programs provide teachers with precise directions for the teaching of these relationships

In the English alphabetic system, individual letters are abstract and without meaning. In order to read words, readers must figure out the relationship between printed letters (graphemes) and their sounds (phonemes); they must know how print maps to sound – the alphabetic principle. This requires connecting approximately 44 sounds with the 26 letters of the alphabet (Moats, 1998).

The English language contains many inconsistencies and complex patterns of words. Therefore, many students have a difficult time learning to read unless the most basic and common sound/spelling relationships and high-frequency words are explicitly and systematically taught. This lack of understanding denies them important grapho-phonemic cues as they work toward fluent and automatic reading. One difference between good and poor readers is the ability to use letter/spelling correspondences to identify words (Juel, 1991). There is compelling evidence that systematic phonics instruction is the most effective, especially for students who are "at-risk," socially and economically (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1996; Armbruster et al., 2001).

The National Reading Panel (2000) found that no one method of teaching phonics was superior over another. Moats states, "in a well-designed and executed program, decoding is taught in relation to the student's stage of reading development. The inherent structure of language provides the scaffold for program organization. Teaching itself is explicit, systematic, and connected to meaning. It respects the ways that children learn language, through active extraction of patterns and successive approximations" (Rhode Island Reading First Application, *The "Rhode" to Reading Achievement*, 2003).

Formal phonics instruction should begin in kindergarten. Research findings indicate that kindergarteners who receive beginning phonics instruction display an enhanced ability to read and spell words; and first graders are better able to decode and spell (encode), showing significant improvement in their ability to comprehend text (Armbruster et al., 2001). In first grade, students move toward the decoding of more complex grapho-phonemic correspondences (i.e. blends: /st/ and /cl/; consonant digraphs: /ch/ and /sh/; vowel digraphs: /oa/ and /ai/.)

For students in second grade and beyond, explicit instruction in morphemic/structural analysis (affixes: prefixes and suffixes, base words, word origins) is critical to decoding multi-syllabic words. These words are the majority of unfamiliar words they will encounter in text. Systematic phonics instruction, coupled with instruction in structural

analysis of words, increases accuracy in decoding and word recognition skills. This, in turn, facilitates comprehension. For struggling readers of all ages, a lack of vocabulary knowledge is sometimes perceived as a deficit in decoding skills.

"Automatic sight word reading and automatic recognition of commonly encountered word chunks negate the necessity to decode alphabetically" (Pressley, 1998). Most high-frequency words do not follow common letter/sound correspondences of English and cannot be decoded (i.e. the, you, was). Students must receive direct instruction in high-frequency words. Kame'enui and Simmons (2000) suggest the use of decodable texts, if needed, as a scaffolded step between explicit skill acquisition and a students' ability to read quality trade books. Students will benefit from multiple opportunities to learn high frequency and non-decodable (sight) words through rereading of text, shared reading, interactive writing, and independent writing. Effective phonics instruction teaches students to use these relationships to read and write.

Letter Knowledge, Phonics, and Decoding
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skill***
▪ Understand the difference between speech sounds and the letters that represent them. ▪ Understand speech-to-print correspondence at the sound, syllable pattern, and morphological levels. ▪ Identify and describe the developmental progression in which orthographic knowledge is generally acquired. ▪ Understand and recognize how beginner texts are linguistically organized—by spelling pattern, word frequency, and language pattern. ▪ Recognize the differences among approaches to teaching word attack (implicit, explicit, analytic, synthetic, etc.). ▪ Understand why instruction in word attack should be active and interactive.	▪ Use techniques for teaching letter naming, matching, and formation. ▪ Choose examples of words that illustrate sound-symbol, syllable, and morpheme patterns. ▪ Select and deliver appropriate lessons according to students' levels of spelling, phonics, and word identification skills. ▪ Explicitly teach the sequential blending of individual sounds into a whole word. ▪ Teach active exploration of word structure with a variety of techniques. ▪ Enable students to use word attack strategies as they read connected text.

Refer to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) both local and state for further identification of reading content knowledge and skills regarding PHONICS (R-1).

Fluency

Fluency is
the ability to read text accurately,
quickly, and with smoothness
and expression.

(*National Reading Panel*, 2000)

Fluency in reading begins to develop *before* a student can read continuous text. The quick and effortless identification of letters, association of letters to sounds, and the segmentation of phonemes are many of the beginning steps toward reading fluency.

"When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding…less fluent readers…must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text" (*Put Reading First*, 2001).

There are three dimensions of fluency:

Accuracy	The first dimension is accuracy in word decoding. Readers must be able to sound out or recognize words in a text with minimal errors. Readers need to expend as little mental effort as possible in the decoding aspect of reading, so that their attention can be focused on constructing meaning.
Automatic Processing (Automaticity)	The second dimension of fluency is automatic processing (automaticity). In the early stages of learning to read, readers may be accurate but slow and inefficient at recognizing words. Continuous reading practice helps word recognition become more automatic, rapid, and effortless. Even when students recognize many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless. Automaticity refers only to accurate, speedy word recognition, not to reading with expression. Therefore, automatic word recognition is necessary but not sufficient (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Prosody	The third dimension of fluency is prosody: reading with smoothness, phrasing, and expression. To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include phrases and clauses. All readers must know when to pause appropriately within and at the ends of sentences and when to change emphasis and tone. The appropriate use of punctuation is important.

As they read continuous text, it is critical to provide students with instruction and practice in fluency (Armbruster et al., 2001). These three dimensions of fluency provide a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

Fluency, in spite of its critical role in comprehension, is one of the most "neglected goal[s]" of instruction (Allington, 1983). Fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. It is important to note that fluency is more than the processing of visual information. It is also connected to the student's increasing capacity to take on more complex language structures, make connections among the ideas in the text, between the text, and their background knowledge.

Existing scientific reading research indicates that fluency should be part of a comprehensive and effective reading curriculum (Rasinski, 2004). Fluency level is dependent on what readers are reading, their familiarity with the words, and the amount of practice with the particular genre. To achieve fluency, all students, including beginning readers and older, less proficient readers need specific instruction. This instruction is accomplished by providing students with many opportunities to observe modeled fluent reading and by practicing reading text at their independent level. Stahl (2004) states that fluency instructional strategies need to emphasize guided oral reading practices. This may include the following diverse approaches:

- Repeated Reading: students read the same text multiple times until a desired level of fluency is attained
- Assisted Reading: student and teacher read the same text simultaneously
- Tutor-Based Reading: is a combination of repeated and assisted reading
    - Paired Reading
    - Peer Tutoring
    - Cross Age Tutoring

Effective approaches monitor students reading and provide guidance and feedback. Appropriate scaffolding needs to be provided both when students read at their independent levels and when students read more difficult texts. Fluency must be taught as part of effective reading instruction.

Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skills***
▪ Understand how word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension are related to one another. ▪ Understand the three dimensions of fluency and how to assess each: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. ▪ Understand text features that are related to text difficulty. ▪ Understand who in the class should receive extra practice with fluency development and why.	▪ Determine reasonable expectations for reading fluency at various stages of reading development, using researched-based guidelines and appropriate state and local GLEs/GSEs. ▪ Help students select appropriate texts (of sufficiently easy levels) to promote ample independent, as well as oral reading. ▪ Use techniques for increasing speed of word recognition. ▪ Use techniques for repeated readings of passages, such as alternate oral reading with a partner, reading with a tape, or rereading the same passage up to three times.

Refer to the local Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for further identification of reading content knowledge and skills regarding FLUENCY (R-11).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers
to the words we must know
to communicate effectively.

(Armbruster et al., 2001)

There are four types of vocabulary:

Listening: the words needed to understand what is heard;
Speaking: the words used when speaking;
Reading: the words needed to understand what is read; and
Writing: the words used in writing.

(Nagy & Scott, 2000)

Vocabulary is developed both directly and indirectly through:
Incidental word learning:

- Engaging in daily oral language with articulate adults
- Listening to adults read to them (Meyer et al., 1994)

- Reading extensively on their own
- Participating in peer conversations/social interactions
- Talking about words during "read-aloud" sessions (Anderson, 1996)

The amount of reading a student does is the prime contributor to individual differences in students' vocabularies (Hayes & Aherns, 1988; Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Stanovich, 1986). It's not the quantity of books per year that is important but the number of words read by the student. According to Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988), the average fifth grader reads about 600,000 words a year from books, magazines, and newspapers outside of school. If a student reads fifteen minutes a day in school, the student can be exposed to another 600,000 words of text. Therefore, the total volume of reading for a typical fifth grader is 1 million or more words per year. "The single most important thing a teacher can do to promote incidental vocabulary growth is to increase students' volume of reading" (Nagy, 1988).

Intentional word learning (teacher directed, everyday activities):

- Studying words in texts
- Learning content-area terms
- Applying word-learning strategies

"…Knowing a word is not an all-or-nothing proposition: it is not the case that one either knows or does not know a word. Rather, knowledge of a word should be viewed in terms of the extent or degree of knowledge that people can process" (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Students also need to encounter words with great frequency, at least twelve meaningful interactions (not just two or three), before they will know the word well enough to have an impact on their comprehension (McKeown et al., 1985). This type of instruction sets up conditions to encourage students to use new words across all contexts.

There are three levels of word knowledge: unknown, acquainted, and established (Beck et al., 1987). As students progress through the grades, vocabulary instruction becomes more sophisticated and complex (Honig et al., 2000). Beginning readers need instruction in identifying and sorting common words, describing common objects and events with specific language, and classifying words. Learning the structure of words at the syllable and morpheme levels supports word recognition, spelling, and vocabulary development (Nagy & Anderson, 1984).

Instruction is most beneficial when teachers select vocabulary words based on usefulness. Suggestions for selecting vocabulary words to be learned include the following suggestions from Ellis and Farmer (2003):

- Less is more – depth is more (Teach fewer vocabulary words, but teach for deeper understandings of each word.)
- Teach terms that are central to a unit of study
- Teach terms that address key concepts and ideas
- Teach terms that will be used repeatedly throughout the semester

Teachers continuously build vocabulary knowledge by using: antonyms, synonyms, prefixes, suffixes, multiple meanings of words, shades of meaning, the use of resources (e.g. dictionary, glossary, thesaurus), knowledge of word origins, derivations, root words, analogies, idioms, and figurative language to determine related words and concepts (Honig et al., 2000).

Those words that are conceptually difficult or represent complex concepts not part of students' everyday experience must be intentionally taught (Baumann & Kame'enui, 1991; Nagy, 1988). This intentional instruction supports the teaching of concepts and labels enabling a deeper understanding of content. This instruction is often referred to as the conceptual approach. Anderson and Nagy (1991) asserted that new terms should be defined using language and examples already familiar to the students. The more ideas from background knowledge (schema) that students associate with the new concept, the more likely the concept will become a permanent part of their collective memory (Ellis & Farmer, 2003).

Allen (1999) confirmed these effective practices for building content area vocabulary instruction:

- Activating and building background word knowledge
- Making word learning meaningful
- Building concept knowledge
- Using word and structural analysis to create meaning
- Using context as a text support
- Making reading the heart of vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skills***
▪ Understand the role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in comprehension. ▪ Have a rationale for selecting words for direct teaching before, during, and after reading. ▪ Understand the role and characteristics of direct and contextual methods of vocabulary instruction. ▪ Know reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of reading development; appreciate the wide differences in students' vocabularies.	▪ Select material for reading aloud that will expand students' vocabulary. ▪ Select words for instruction before a passage is read. ▪ Teach word meanings directly through explanation of meaning and example uses, associations to known words, and word relationships. ▪ Provide for repeated encounters with new words and multiple opportunities to use new words. ▪ Explicitly teach how and when to use context to figure out word meanings.

▪ Understand why books themselves are a good source for word learning.	▪ Help students understand how word meanings apply to various contexts by talking about words they encounter in reading.

Refer to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs), both local and state for further identification of reading content knowledge and skills regarding VOCABULARY (R-2; R-3).

Text Comprehension

Text Comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

(*The RAND Reading Study Group*, 2002)

Readers derive meaning when they engage in intentional, problem solving, thinking processes that occur during interaction with a text (Durkin, 1993). "…'Meaning' does not reside ready-made 'in' their text or 'in' the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text" (Rosenblatt, 2005). Meaning is influenced by the text and by the reader's prior knowledge (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Comprehension begins early in life as children engage in a rich language environment. This includes listening to and retelling parts of a story (McGill-Franzen et al., 1999). These practices have demonstrated substantial impact on children's early literacy development. Pearson and Fielding (1982) discussed the importance of developing *listening* comprehension as a prelude to formal reading comprehension instruction. They asserted that young children should be given direct listening comprehension instruction or at the very least, ample opportunities to listen to stories, rhymes, etc. Comprehension abilities developed in the listening mode often transfer to text comprehension. Therefore, developing listening comprehension at all grade levels leads to improved text comprehension.

Reading comprehension doesn't "just happen," it requires active thinking and strategic processing (Anderson et al., 1985). The process of comprehension is interactive (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Meaning does not exist in text, but rather is actively constructed (Snow et al., 2001). "Every reading act is an event or a transaction with the text" (Rosenblatt, 1994). This interaction with the text takes place ***before, during***, and ***after*** reading. According to research (Pearson et al., 1992; Pressley et al., 1989; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000) there are key prominent thinking/comprehension strategies that must be explicitly taught and lead to deeper text comprehension. "Many students only develop the strategies they need with demonstrations of effective strategy use and many opportunities to apply the strategy

over time" (Allington, 2001). Readers make decisions by selecting strategies that fit the kind of text they are reading and their purpose for reading (Honig et al., 2000).

"Strategies are in-the-head actions taken by readers to help them read accurately with understanding" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). "Strategic readers of print text…tend to use a set of comprehension strategies (Dole et al., 1991; Pearson, 1985). Research has focused on identification and instruction of such strategies because poor readers seem to lack them and be unaware of when and how to apply the knowledge they do possess. [Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Pressley, 2000] Paris, Corss and Lipson (1984) concluded that students can be taught about the existence of reading strategies through informed direct instruction. Duke and Pearson (2002) suggested that a model of comprehension instruction should include explicit description, modeling, collaborative use, guided practice, and independent use of the selected strategy. Pearson, Roehler, Dole, and Duffy (1992) developed a comprehensive synopsis of strategic reader research organized around seven comprehension strategies:" (Schmar-Dobler, 2003)

Seven Strategies for Reading Comprehension
(Schmar-Dobler, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 47:1, September 2003)

Activate Prior Knowledge	Strategic readers use what is known about the topic of a text and the way a text is organized to check their comprehension and make mental connections between new information and existing knowledge.
Monitor Comprehension	Reading rate and strategies are adjusted when a reader needs to understand different kinds of text.
Repair Comprehension	When meaning has been lost, fix-up strategies (such as re-reading and skipping ahead) are used by strategic readers to move back on track.
Determine Important Ideas	Making predictions and identifying the most important ideas of the text come before, during, and after reading.
Synthesize	Throughout reading, strategic readers mentally summarize information.
Draw Inferences	Strategic readers combine prior knowledge with textual information to make inferences about the text. Gaps in understanding are filled in through prediction, inferences, and new ideas.

Ask Questions	Questions are developed and answered by strategic readers throughout the reading of the text to activate prior knowledge, check comprehension, classify ideas, and focus attention.

Some strategies have insufficient research to validate and confirm use as proven practice. Visualization is one such strategy. It is used frequently in classrooms. "Good readers often form mental pictures, or images, as they read" (*Put Reading First*, 2001). Beers describes mental imagery (visualizing) "as seeing the action of the text" (Beers, 2003). Research supports (Pressley, 1976) when readers visualize during and after reading they understand and remember what they have read.

Successful application of comprehension strategies distinguishes a proficient reader from a struggling reader. Collectively, these strategies form the foundation for effective reading comprehension instruction. This instruction teaches students to use strategies flexibly and in combination. Strategies, used ***before***, ***during***, and ***after*** reading, must be directly and explicitly taught (separately then in combination) over an extended period of time. Effective instruction models *what* the strategy is; *why* it is important; and *how*, *when,* and *where* to apply it. As students learn how and when to use a selected strategy or combination of strategies, guided practice and collaborative use scaffold instruction. Teaching strategies within content areas does enable students to become proficient, self-regulating strategy users (Snow et al., 2001).

The instruction of reading comprehension presents unique challenges because of the variety and range of texts that students interact with across their school careers. "Over time, students who are exposed to a variety of text types with increasing complexity also learn how text features differ by genre and they gain confidence in peeling back the layers of complexity for a deeper understanding of what is read…A variety of factors influence text complexity. The complexity of text, or the degree of challenge of a particular text, is the result of specific combinations and interactions of these factors" (Appendix F, *Grade Level Expectations/Grade Span Expectations*, 2004).

Factors that Influence Increasing Text Complexity
(Adapted from: Appendix F,
Grade Level Expectations/Grade Span Expectations, 2004)

- Word difficulty and language structure
- Genre and the characteristic features of each type of text
- Background knowledge and/or degree of familiarity with content needed by the reader
- Format and layout
- Length of text
- Text structure and discourse style

Historically researchers have characterized texts as narrative and expository. Within Rhode Island's Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs), the term literary text is used for narrative text and the term informational text is used for expository text. For a suggested list of examples of literary and informational texts, refer to *Grade Level Expectations (GLEs)* and *Grade Span Expectations (GSEs)* Appendix A: *Suggested Informational and Literary Texts of the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs).*

Narrative text (literary text) is a form of writing in which the author tells a story, either factual or fictional, in prose or verse (Harris & Hodges, 1981). Explicit instruction focuses on the elements of narrative text. These structures/elements include characterization, setting, plot, theme, mood, resolution, etc. Subplots, minor characters, and/or minor themes are frequently present in more complicated texts.

Expository text (informational text) is a form of writing that is intended to inform the reader about a topic. It reports factual information and the relationship among ideas. Expository texts often have many different structures within a given text (ER&D, *Reading Comprehension Instruction*, 2005). Expository text is often dense and contains much information and unfamiliar technical vocabulary. Therefore, students perform complex cognitive tasks to extract and synthesize its content (Lapp, Flood, & Ranck-Buhr, 1995). Beginning in kindergarten and throughout their school career, students require explicit instruction about expository text structures. Anderson & Armbruster have identified the following expository text structures:

- Compare/Contrast
- Cause/Effect
- Description/Classification
- Problem/Solution
- Question/Answer
- Sequence

Teaching text structures must be part of effective comprehension instruction. Students' awareness and understanding of text structure plays a key role in reading comprehension (Kame'enui et al., 2002). Students need to learn what the characteristics of these structures are and the words that signal a particular type of structure. Understanding text structure gives students insight into the author's message and leads to more efficient and effective comprehension. Each text structure makes different demands on the reader. All text structures require explicit instruction.

The overall goal of comprehension instruction is to develop *thoughtful literacy*, which is the ability to analyze, evaluate, reflect, and assist oneself in constructing meaning of text (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). The Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) address *thoughtful literacy* through the clusters of *Initial Understanding* and *Analysis & Interpretation* for both literary and informational texts.

Text Comprehension
(Adapted from: *Learning First Alliance, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skills***
▪ Know the cognitive processes involved in comprehension; know the techniques and strategies that are most effective, for what types of students, and with what content. ▪ Identify the typical structure of common narrative and expository text genres. ▪ Recognize the characteristics of "reader friendly" text. ▪ Identify phrase, sentence, paragraph, and text characteristics of "book language" that students may misinterpret. ▪ Appreciate that reading strategies vary for specific purposes. ▪ Understand the role of background knowledge in text comprehension. ▪ Understand the similarities and differences between written composition and text comprehension.	▪ Help students engage with texts and consider ideas deeply. ▪ Choose and implement instruction appropriate for specific students and texts. ▪ Facilitate comprehension of academic language such as connecting words, figures of speech, idioms, humor, and embedded sentences. ▪ Communicate directly to students the value of reading for various purposes. ▪ Help students use written responses and discussion to process meaning more fully. ▪ Preview text and identify the background experiences and concepts that are important for comprehension of that text and that help students call on or acquire that knowledge.

Refer to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) both local and state for further identification of reading content knowledge and skills regarding TEXT COMPREHENSION (R-4; R-5; R-6; R-7; R-8; R-12; R-13; R-15; R-16).

Adolescent Literacy

"Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn" (*Adolescent Literacy Position Statement*, 1999).

The National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices' Adolescent Literacy Advisory Panel found "as students get older, the more potential exists for their falling even further behind and becoming disengaged from learning." It also identified barriers to adolescent reading success which include:

- Decreased motivation to read;
- Inadequate opportunities to develop vocabulary, background, and content knowledge;
- Lack of access to comprehension instruction;
- Poor decoding and fluency skills;
- Increasing reading and writing demands across the curriculum;
- Reading and writing instruction disconnected from content area literacy demands;
- Reading and writing instruction not seen as province of middle and high school instruction; and
- Lack of widespread support for adolescent literacy.

(*Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy*, 2005).

In *Reading Next* (2004), Biancarosa and Snow state that the demands of comprehension include:

- How to read purposely;
- How to select materials that are of interest;
- How to learn from those materials;
- How to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words;
- How to integrate new information with information previously known;
- How to resolve conflicting content in different texts;
- How to differentiate fact from opinion; and,
- How to recognize the perspective of the writer.

The goal of adolescent literacy instruction is to effect students' comprehension abilities, as opposed to affecting their understanding of one particular text (Beers, 2003). Therefore, comprehension needs to be viewed and taught as a process rather than a product of reading.

"Adolescents deserve nothing less than a comprehensive effort to support their continued development as readers and writers… The need to guide adolescents to advanced stages of literacy is not the result of any teaching or learning failure in the preschool or primary

years; it is a necessary part of normal reading development… [Guidance is needed] as they learn unfamiliar vocabulary, manage new reading and writing styles, extend positive attitudes towards literacy, and independently apply complex learning strategies to print" (*IRA Adolescent Literacy Position Statement*, 1999).

Content area teachers must provide and reinforce instruction of skills and strategies that are effective in their subject area. Content area teachers should emphasize reading and writing practices that are specific to their subjects. As a result, students read and write like mathematicians, historians, scientists, etc. Comprehension strategies need to be taught explicitly in all content areas. Effective instruction demonstrates *what* the strategy is; *why* it is important; and *how*, *when*, and *where* to apply it. As students learn how and when to use a selected strategy or combination of strategies, guided practice and collaborative use scaffold instruction. Teaching strategies within content areas does enable academically diverse students to become proficient, self-regulating strategy users (Snow et al., 2001). It is also important for content area teachers to model and use instructional supports (i.e. graphic organizers, prompted outlines, structured reviews, guided discussions) to promote understanding and to enhance student performance (*Reading Next*, 2004).

Comprehending content texts requires skills that are different from the skills needed to comprehend literature. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) maintains, "too often reading and writing instruction focuses solely on literature and does not promote the transfer of the skills into the context of content-area materials…Language Arts teachers need to expand their instruction to include approaches and texts that will facilitate not only comprehension but learning from texts."

Simonsen and Singer (1992) have also outlined four strategies for all secondary teachers to use to improve comprehension. These include:

- Selecting comprehensible books at a student's instructional level;
- Frontloading difficult concepts by giving students information about the text prior to reading;
- Giving students understanding of the vocabulary in the text; and,
- Providing clear understandable goals to guide the reading, by focusing and setting a purpose.

Rhode Island has specifically addressed the issue of middle and high school literacy instruction in Section 4.0 Literacy of the *Regulations Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School.* These regulations require that the literacy needs of all elementary, middle, and high school students be met so that all students graduating from high school attain a strong literacy foundation. The Scaffolded Framework for Secondary Literacy provides a framework for teaching and learning and is used as the vehicle for developing literacy in each content area. The main themes are as follows:

- Incorporating reading strategies consistent with the research on adolescent literacy;

- Pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading;
- During reading activities that support the understanding and acquisition of content; and,
- Post-reading activities that foster evidence-based speaking and writing.

Rhode Island's Scaffolded Literacy model expects that all students will receive school-wide discipline-specific literacy instruction: explicitly taught discipline-specific literacy skills that all students need in order to read and acquire information in every subject. This instruction assists students in navigating increasingly complex content concepts, text structures, and vocabulary. The detailed explanation of how to provide this instruction is located within the Five Essential Areas of Reading Instruction beginning on page 20. For characteristics of what proficient readers do, refer to *Proficient Readers* on page 18.

For a detailed description of student expectations refer to the Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs).

Reading and the English Language Learner (ELL)

The number of linguistically and culturally diverse students in the United States continues to increase. The growth of minority languages has had a significant effect on American schools and society in general. Students who speak a language other than English in their homes live in all areas of Rhode Island. English Language Learners (ELL) are those "linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified through reliable and valid assessments as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English, and thereby, qualifying for support services" (*WIDA Consortium*, 2004). These students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds come to the task of learning to read with a wealth of knowledge and experiences – all built within a different language set. Peregoy and Boyle (2001) suggest our first task as teachers is to become aware of, honor, and build upon our students' personal histories and cultures, "providing education that focuses on using language as the primary tool for intellectual and academic development" (Gibbons, 2002).

The degree of students' native language proficiency is a strong predictor of their language development (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). For some of our students, their home language is highly developed and includes phonemic awareness, knowledge of phonics and alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and a high level of text comprehension. Cummins (2000) has argued that being able to read in the home language facilitates learning to read in the second language. This phenomenon is referred to as the transfer principle and is the pivotal theory upon which bilingual education is structured. The transfer principle is equally applicable to English as Second Language (ESL) programs, in that, a student who enters an ESL classroom, as a capable and critical reader in their home language will transfer those skills and strategies to English reading. These learners will be able to make the transition to learning in and through English with sufficient instruction in vocabulary and the structure of the English language. It is critical to note, when working with English Language Learners "explicit attention must be given to developing students' receptive skills in listening and reading, as well as to their productive skills in speaking and writing" (Valdés, 2001).

For other students the oral foundation upon which reading is built is highly developed in the home language, but little or no reading skills have been established. These students may enter the reading experience with or without phonemic awareness, a significant oral vocabulary, and/or experiential background in the home language. These students may have neither recognition of the sound/symbol correspondence of any language nor sight vocabulary to the reading experience. These students may also have no repertoire of comprehension strategies. Unfamiliarity with the language of the text, whether it is the vocabulary or the structure, makes it difficult or impossible to engage with a text. Therefore, the reader may not be able to predict, question, infer, and/or use language or context cues to aide the reading comprehension process. Cummins (2000), Gibbons (2002), Gonzalez (1999), Valdés (2001) and Ovando, et al. (2002), argue that those students whose first experience learning to read occurs in the second language need particular scaffolds which provide an opportunity for them to:

- Build the background experiential knowledge that a particular text might require for critical understanding
- Develop vocabulary in English in order to be able to extract information, discuss and question both orally and in writing
- Link new concepts to known information in the home language to increase text comprehension

For other English Language Learners, particularly for the culturally and linguistically diverse student for whom English may be the primary language, their language is a combination of the home language and a working knowledge of English. Many times these English Language Learners appear to speak English and even read English. They have acquired various levels of vocabulary, including a simple working knowledge that enables them to navigate playground and classroom interactions to a level that allows them to engage in some reading. These students also bring a wealth of experiential knowledge to their reading experiences. The challenge for these students is that some of the knowledge has been built through a combination of their home language and English. If there is a mismatch between the home language and the school language, students may be at a disadvantage for success in reading tasks and thus spend many of their school years trying to catch up (Snow et al., 1998). Reading instruction for these students requires that all teachers, both the English as a Second Language specialists and any general education (mainstream) teacher working with these students teach language learning and metacognitive strategies as part of the curriculum. Teachers need to build on the active knowledge, at whatever level and in whatever language, these students bring to the reading experience (Valdés, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

These students often encounter similar difficulties as the student who brings little or no knowledge of English to the reading experience and require similar scaffolds of cultural literacy, vocabulary building, and comprehension strategies. Gibbons (2002) also reminds us, "there are considerable differences between families within any particular cultural group." In order to teach all students, including English Language Learners and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, teachers cannot view them only as a significant instructional group, but need to teach them as the individual students that they are. Teachers should see ESL learners as full members of the school community, who have specific learning needs, rather than as a separate group who need to prove themselves linguistically before they can claim their full entitlement (Clegg, 1996).

English Language Learners must have access to the entire curriculum regardless of the amount of English they bring to the reading experience. The most effective approach to reading instruction for English Language Learners integrates and connects language and content (Valdés, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cummins, 2000; Ovando et al., 2002). Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) describes "funds of knowledge" that ELL students bring to school. These schemata, often related to family, home, religion, and workplace, have often been untapped resources. When teachers learn about students' background knowledge, they can integrate it into classroom reading tasks.

In addition to making connections to content, linguistically and culturally diverse students benefit from *frontloading* new learning. *Frontloading* involves creating activities that will either activate knowledge students possess and will need to use in reading a text, or will build knowledge they do not have but need to possess to be successful. Good *frontloading* activities are a framework to support and organize students' use of new concepts and strategies throughout their reading of text (Wilhelm, 2001). An example of *frontloading* is creating and activating schema through predicting, questioning, and using text structure and access features. This technique scaffolds new content, thereby making it more accessible.

The responsibility for students' second language development belongs to the school and ultimately to their teachers. In scaffolding their learning, three principles need to be assumed by the teacher:

- link with and build on what students bring to school – their language, culture, understandings and experiences;
- provide the kind of support to enable them to learn successfully through collaboration with their teachers and with other students; and,
- willingly "hand over" to students the responsibility of using what they have learned independently, in new contexts and for their own purposes.

(Gibbons, 2002)

English Language Learners (ELL) need to be able to use English, not only for day-to-day purposes, but also for academic learning and ultimately for negotiating their place in the wider society (Gibbons, 2002). "The difficult times in which we live demand that our classrooms nurture thinking and creative problem-solving abilities as well as sensitivity to the perspectives of those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Only in these kinds of instructional spaces will language learning and academic abilities truly develop" (Cummins, 1996). Districts within Rhode Island determine the ELL programs that best suit the needs of the population that they serve. Therefore, teachers should create opportunities, experiences, interactions, and environments that value and respect ELL students' knowledge, and treat them as valuable members of the classroom/school community, helping them learn and succeed.

English Language Learning

(Adapted from: *Texas Teacher Reading Academies, 2000*)

Teacher Knowledge	***Teacher Skills***
▪ Understand the process of first and second language acquisition. ▪ Understand the cultural implications of learning. ▪ Understand the variations among students acquiring language. ▪ Understand the reading process.	▪ Facilitate the development of essential language, reading, and writing skills at the students' levels of proficiency in English. ▪ Create an instructional program that meets students' need. ▪ Use comprehensible and meaningful language during instruction.

	▪ Develop literacy through instruction that builds on language, listening comprehension, print concepts, and the alphabetic principle. ▪ Provide meaningful opportunities to use English and interact with English-speaking peers. ▪ Use graphic organizers, charts, objects, manipulative materials, and other visual organizers. ▪ Recognize and value the different discourse (speaking) patterns across cultures

WIDA

*Rhode Island is part of a consortium of ten partner states (**Wi**sconsin, **D**elaware, **A**rkansas [WIDA], Illinois, District of Columbia, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Alabama) that has developed English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12. This will provide a framework for large-scale state and classroom assessments.*

Implications for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Essential Areas of Reading Instruction

Characteristic of high quality instruction for ELL students include teachers who:

- provide scaffolds in how to use strategies, skills, and concepts.
- utilize small group instruction.
- adjust own use of English to make concepts comprehensible.
- utilize visuals for instruction.
- select and incorporate students' responses, ideas, examples, and experiences into their lesson(s).
- provide students time to respond, extra instruction, practice, and review.
- ask questions to ensure comprehension.

(Gersten & Geva, 2003)

Phonemic Awareness

Many phonemes transfer across languages and teachers need to provide clear feedback and clear models when students experience trouble hearing and/or vocalizing a particular sound (Gersten, 2005). When students struggle with pronunciation, it does not indicate a lack of understanding. Therefore, teachers should continue instruction (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Teachers should use small group instruction with multiple opportunities to hear models and to maximize participation (Argüelles, 2005).

Phonics Instruction

Snow et al. (1998) advises that students reading in their native language be taught to transfer their skills to reading in English as they acquire proficiency in spoken English.

Teachers of ELL students struggling with phonics should identify decoding skills that may transfer across languages (August & Hakuta, 1997).

Fluency Instruction

The acquisition of a large sight vocabulary assists students in learning from context and reading connected text (Grabe, 1991). The use of repeated readings, teacher modeling, and progress monitoring are effective in improving fluency of ELLs (Argüelles, 2005). Social interaction can help ELLs acquire knowledge of fluency in English.

Vocabulary Instruction

English language learners need extensive vocabulary support through pre-teaching, modeling, and visual aides (Honig et al., 2000). These strategies help to build deep conceptual knowledge in English. ELLs will need instruction in vocabulary to build semantic knowledge (Garcia & Nagy, 1993). However, before concluding a student lacks the background knowledge, teachers should attempt to connect to knowledge in their native language.

Comprehension Instruction

ELL students may fail to apply strategies for making inferences in their first language to reading in English (August & Hakuta, 1997). Therefore, teachers need to encourage the use of these strategies for constructing meaning and encourage students to see their bilingualism as an asset (Peterson et al., 2003). ELL students need explicit instruction in comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading.

Writing Instruction

Assess and evaluate student writing, not in terms of comparing it to text by an accomplished expert, but in terms of current accomplishments and next levels of development. In other words, use portfolios to keep in touch with what students know now and what they need to learn next (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001).

Reading Instruction for Struggling Readers

The needs of struggling readers are diverse. Due to the fact that students' needs are varied and complex, it is impossible to find *the* magic technique, program, or set of materials that may work for every struggling reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Good instruction for struggling readers meets students where they are and moves them forward. Students meet with success when teachers engage in the following practices:

- observing students analytically;
- using valid screening and diagnostic assessments that identify students' area(s) of specific need; and
- using results of data to modify and/or adjust materials and teaching techniques based on identified needs.

At all levels, struggling readers need to be supported with strong literacy models, characterized by high-quality, differentiated classroom instruction.

Characteristics of Struggling Readers

(Adapted from: *Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy*, 2005)

- Limited oral language proficiency
- Poor decoding skills (i.e. how to decipher a written word based on knowledge that letters represent sounds)
- Poor fluency (i.e. the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with appropriate expression)
- Limited vocabulary
- Limited background knowledge
- Limited content-area knowledge
- Poor comprehension strategy knowledge and use

Struggling readers may exhibit one or more of the aforementioned characteristics. Therefore, they need to participate in high quality literacy classrooms that include focused intense instruction and additional time for practice. Schools will need to be flexible and innovative as they find ways to deliver additional support to struggling readers. Dr. Joseph Torgesen, Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research, has identified five important elements of effective interventions:

- More systematic and explicit instruction in any component(s) a student is struggling with: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, or oral and written communication
- Significant increase in the intensity of instruction; for example, a longer period of time or a smaller group
- Ample opportunities for guided practice of skills taught
- Systematic cueing of students to use the strategies and skills taught

- Appropriate levels of scaffolding as students learn to apply new skills

At the secondary level, "recent research suggests students will need three types of literacy services to scaffold their literacy development. One is a school-wide, discipline-specific approach needed to build on and further develop the literacy gains made at the elementary level. The other two (targeted and intensive interventions) are approaches to close existing gaps in student performance" (*Initial Guidance for the Literacy Component of the Regulations of the Board of Regents*, 2003).

Refer to the Rhode Island Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) Guidelines 2005 and the Rhode Island Initial Guidance for the Literacy Component of the Regulations of the Board of Regents 2003 for a detailed explanation of working with struggling readers.

Motivation

"A reader is someone who does read, not someone who can read."
Isabel Beck

Motivated readers are engaged in the process of reading, willing to take risks, have confidence in their abilities, and are seldom easily discouraged. "…Students need both the skill and the will to become competent and motivated readers" (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983). Students want and need work (i.e. assignments, meaningful activities) that enables them to demonstrate and improve their sense of themselves as competent and successful human beings. Students work harder when they see they are improving and they are also energized by praise from teachers, parents, and peers, especially when that praise is honest and specific (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Sweet, 1997; Wigfield, 1997).

Research has shown that home environments and support from a parent (or another adult) is important to literacy development (Durkin, 1966; Hall & Moats, 1999). These studies focused on the acquisition of reading skills. "McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) surveyed children's attitudes toward reading and concluded that children's views of recreational and academic reading are tied to reading ability as well as to community norms and beliefs" (Strommen & Mates, 2004). Pressley (2001) concluded that motivation had a significant impact on students' learning. Without motivation, "the difficult work of cognitive learning does not occur rapidly, if it occurs at all" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997).

In *Reading Next* (2004), Biancarosa and Snow concluded, "a lack of incentive and engagement also explains why even skilled readers and writers do not progress in reading and academic achievement in middle and high school. The proportion of students who are not engaged or motivated by their school experiences grows at every grade level and reaches epidemic proportion in high school."

Students who have experienced repeated failure in reading are often unwilling to participate as readers or writers. Students perform at their best when they feel competent, view a task as being challenging but doable, understand why they are undertaking the task, are given choices, feel a part of the process, and have interesting materials and activities (Snow et al., 1998; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Newmann (1989) identified five factors that are related to enhancing student engagement and motivation in school:

Competency	Students have an especially powerful need to develop capabilities.
Rewards	When students perceive that academic achievement will lead to incentives they value, they are more willing to engage in hard work.

Intrinsic Interest	If students find materials interesting or enjoy the way a topic is presented, they are more apt to expend effort in learning.
Social Support	Learning involves risk taking, therefore, students need to feel supported by teachers and their peers to overcome fears of failure and be regarded as accepted members of a community.
Sense of Ownership	Students need to have some influence on the nature of their learning: they need reasons to be personally invested in the work they are asked to do.

Teachers must explicitly address student motivation as an integral part of lesson planning. Students, especially adolescents, need to perceive that the tasks they are asked to do are worthwhile. When students have opportunities to make choices about their reading materials, they read more and achieve at higher levels (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). After reviewing the research on motivation, Marzano concluded that "when students are working on goals they themselves have set, they are more motivated and efficient, and they achieve more than they do when working to meet goals set by the teacher…If educators expect students to be motivated to succeed at classroom tasks, they must somehow link those tasks to student goals" (Marzano, 1992).

Mazzoni and Gambrell (2003) stated that the goal of successful instruction is the development of readers who *can read* and who *choose to read*. Classrooms that foster reading motivation have been proven to support students in their reading development. These researchers identified several key factors including:

- A book-rich classroom environment
- Opportunities for choice
- Opportunities to interact socially with others
- A teacher who values reading and is enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading with students

Refer to the local Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for further identification regarding BREADTH OF READING (R-14; R-17).

Assessment

"Base educational decisions on evidence, not ideology."
(*Learning First Alliance,* 1998)

Evidence gathered from evaluation and assessment(s) provide the groundwork for instructional decisions. The terms evaluation and assessment have often been used interchangeably. However, they have different meanings. Evaluation and assessment must be included as integral parts of a literacy curriculum.

Evaluation is the process of making judgments about the evidence (assessments) collected. Evaluation allows us to:

- Set learning goals based on the knowledge of the student
- Plan specific learning experiences
- Determine the effectiveness of the teaching
- Show the student's progress towards meeting the learning goals
- Guide the setting of the new instructional goals

Assessment refers to the process of observing and accumulating evidence of an individual student's progress. All assessment should provide feedback to inform instruction, monitor progress or form the basis for evaluation. Assessment allows us to:

- Identify the student's strengths and instructional needs
- Observe and record learning behaviors and strategies
- Provide feedback and support for the learner

Assessments must meet two basic requirements:

Validity	The degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure; and also, the extent to which a test will provide information needed to make a decision.
Reliability	The degree to which a test yields consistent results. In other words, if administration were repeated multiple times/places, the results would be the same or very similar.

Rhode Island schools and districts need to construct a deliberate comprehensive (local and state) assessment system. The purposes of the comprehensive assessment system are to document and monitor improved achievement, to make informed decisions about instruction, and to evaluate effectiveness of programs and instructional strategies. A meaningful assessment system provides a complete picture of diverse learning goals and how well students are attaining them. This assessment system documents what students

know and are able to do. It also documents where the learning and teaching gaps are in terms of their understanding of content and skills as outlined in:

- Grade Level Expectations (GLEs)
- Grade Span Expectations (GSEs)
- National Standards (both content and applied learning, for subjects where GLEs/GSEs have not been developed)

Carefully chosen or developed assessments are an integral part of the local assessment system. There are four types of assessment needed to inform both programmatic and instructional decisions. These are: screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcome, which are described below. Together, evaluation of the results of these four types of assessment informs and directs the selection and utilization of resources and materials, assists practitioners in determining appropriate teaching strategies, and increases the likelihood that all students will receive optimal instruction.

Screening	▪ Predicts which students are likely to experience difficulty. ▪ Identifies students who are at-risk and in need of further diagnostic assessment(s) and/or additional interventions.
Screen and review the achievement of **every student, every year** to distinguish those students who are succeeding or will continue to succeed with the regular instruction from those who may need additional assistance by using performance on statewide assessment, local assessment data, portfolios, student records, PLP, etc.	

Diagnosis	▪ Provides more detailed information about a student who has been identified as being "at-risk" at any time during the year. ▪ Provides more precise and in-depth analysis of a student's strengths, weaknesses; frames instruction for the particular student. ▪ Determines more specifically problematic areas for the student.
Analyze assessment and other relevant data to inform appropriately designed instruction (e.g. PLP or targeted intervention).	

Progress Monitoring	▪ Informs the teacher about the student's progress. ▪ Determines if the student is making adequate progress. ▪ Provides timely measures to inform instruction.
THREE TYPES OF PROGRESS MONITORING: ▪ Intervention progress monitoring occurs frequently (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) for students with intervention plans. The results of this type of progress monitoring inform instructional decisions (e.g. the PLP process is used for reading interventions) and shows the effectiveness of the interventions. ▪ Classroom level progress monitoring is on-going and includes tasks typically used during the instructional process (curriculum embedded). It measures student's learning based on systematic observation and guides the specifics of instruction within the curriculum. ▪ District/School level progress monitoring provides evidence to make informed district/school decisions for resource allocations, professional development planning/implementation, program planning and evaluation.	
The primary differences between classroom and intervention progress monitoring (i.e. targeted and PLP students) are the specificity of the progress monitoring assessment selected for use, as well as the frequency of administration and analysis.	

Outcome	▪ Provides broader information about programs and student learning. ▪ Leads to program evaluation, which in turn, influences the selection and utilization of resources, materials, and personnel. ▪ Provides data about what has been accomplished over a period of time.
(i.e. Collectively reading assessments measure progress in each of the five areas of instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and text comprehension).	

Refer to the Rhode Island Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) Guidelines 2005, Appendix E for suggested screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring reading instruments.

No single instrument can provide a comprehensive view. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education advocates a variety of formal and informal assessments, some of which should be performance-based. These assessments should be integrated into the curriculum to provide the total picture of student learning. Analytic examination of student work is one method of assessment that allows teachers to

determine the direction of future instruction. When conducted collaboratively, this process provides a basis for reflective dialogue on what students understand.

Refer to the Rhode Island Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) Guidelines 2005 and in the Initial Guidance for Literacy (4.0) and Graduation by Proficiency (6.0) Components of the Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School for more detailed information.

Engaging Families in Literacy Development

In order to produce a literate society, schools must construct opportunities for family engagement. These opportunities encourage and support student learning and recognize families as partners in the education of their children and adolescents. It is critical that families be informed frequently of their child or adolescent's literacy progress.

Hess and Holloway (1984) identified five broad areas of family functioning that may influence reading development at all grade levels. These include:

- Placing a value on literacy: by reading and writing themselves, families encourage their children and adolescents to read and write.
- Expressing expectations for achievement: if children and adolescents understand what is expected of them, they are more likely to reach toward achieving them.
- Having reading materials available: literacy experiences are more likely to occur in homes that contain books for children and adolescents, as well as other reading and writing materials.
- Reading together: literacy is the result of social interaction, of discussing the ideas espoused by the printed word.
- Making opportunities for verbal interaction: by discussing ideas, children and adolescents extend their repertoire of ideas and determine their own opinions.

"Effectively engaging parents and families in the education of their children has the potential to be far more transformational than any other type of education reform" (*National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*, 2004). Family and school partnerships, based on literacy initiatives, yield:

Teachers **Administrators** **Schools**	▪ more understanding of families ▪ higher expectations for their students ▪ better morale ▪ higher ratings by parents ▪ better linkages to resources in the community
Students	▪ higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates ▪ better school attendance ▪ greater enrollment in postsecondary education

Families	▪ improved communication with school community ▪ better understanding of the scope of the work ▪ improved attitude towards school and school personnel ▪ gain more confidence in the school ▪ often enroll in continuing education to advance their own learning

(Adapted from: *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*, 2004 and *Family-School Partnerships: Essential Elements of Literacy Instruction in the United States*, 2002)

Schools play a vital role initiating activities that focus on families and the development of literacy skills. Schools can be instrumental in assisting families with the understanding of the importance of literacy in their lives. And as a result of this understanding, families help their children value reading. Administrators and teachers can become leaders in creating family literacy events and activities designed to assist and involve families (*Family Literacy and School Community: A Partnership for Lifelong Learning*, 2001).

Depending on the needs of families, teachers need to play different roles. There are many ways in which teachers can take an active role in developing family literacy in their classrooms (i.e. newsletter, calendars, suggested reading list, book exchange, classroom family night, family play, brochures) (*Family Literacy and School Community: A Partnership for Lifelong Learning*, 2001).

In conclusion, "parents who are involved with interventions lead to an increase in at-home communication and an increase in parents' knowledge about reading" (*Family-School Partnerships: Essential Elements of Literacy Instruction in the United States*, 2002).

Refer to the Parent/Guardian Support Resources section of The Rhode Island Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) Guidelines 2005 for more detailed information.

GLOSSARY

(limited to terms not explained in the document)

ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE – letter and letter combinations represent individual phonemes in words in written language

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE – students from diverse ethnic, racial, and language groups

DECODABLE TEXT – text selections that contain phonic elements that have been taught, making the text accessible to the student at the early stages of reading development. As students progress in reading development, there is less need for the support of decodable texts

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER – linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified through reliable and valid assessments as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English, and thereby, qualifying them for support services (WIDA Consortium, 2000)

GRADE LEVEL/SPAN EXPECTATIONS (GLEs/GSEs) – Rhode Island state standards for what students should know, understand, and be able to do

GUIDED WRITING – teacher guides writing process and provides instruction through mini-lessons and conferences

INDEPENDENT WRITING – students have the opportunity to choose topics and engage in the process of writing

INTERVENTION – additional, intensive, focused, and appropriate instruction provided to students who are struggling with learning

INTERACTIVE WRITING – teachers and students work together to compose messages and stories; teacher supports the process as scribe

METACOGNITION – the process of consciously thinking about one's own reading or learning while actually being engaged

ONSET – the initial consonant or consonants in a syllable (i.e. *stop - st* is the onset)

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE (*schema or background knowledge*) – knowledge acquired from previous experience

RIME – the vowel and any consonants that follow in a syllable (i.e. *stop - op* is the rime)

RUBRIC – a written description of criteria expected in order to meet a certain level(s) of performance

SECONDARY – middle and high school grade levels

SHARED READING – the teacher involves the students in reading together by using enlarged text (i.e. big book, chart or transparency)

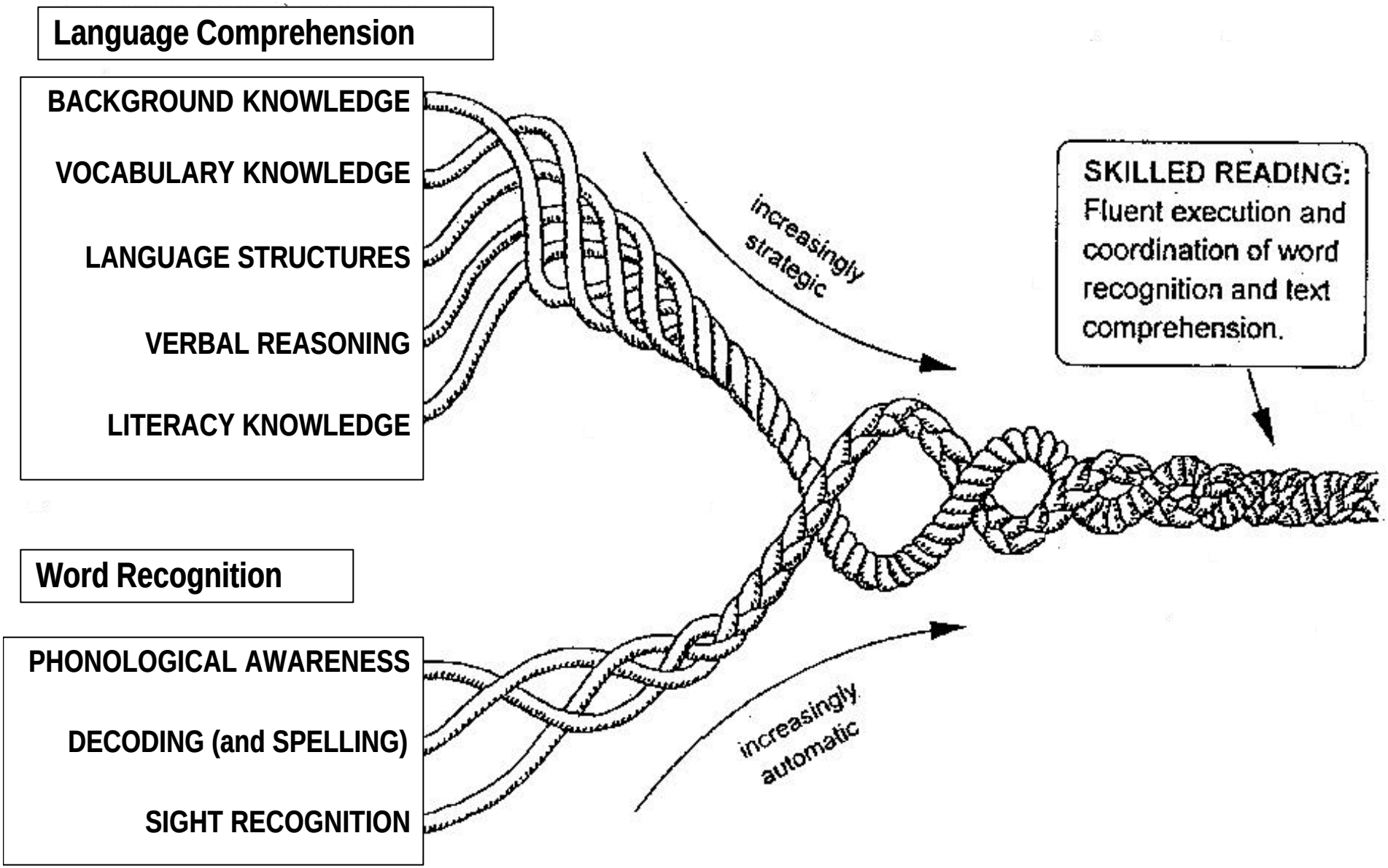
SIGHT VOCABULARY (*high frequency words)* – words that are recognized immediately; may be phonetically regular or irregular

TEXT – any type of written material (i.e. short story, chapter in a book, article in a newspaper, package label)

Appendix A

The Many Strands that are Woven into Skilled Reading

(Scarborough, 2001)



Appendix B
Instructional Suggestions for Addressing the Areas of Reading and Writing

Component	Description	PreK-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Grouping Options
Read Aloud	Teacher models the reading process by reading a variety of genres, as students listen, discuss, and respond	Picture Books, Big Books, Beginning Chapter Books, Information Text, Poetry	Picture Books, Chapter Books, Information Text, Poetry	Novels, Information Text, Poetry, Short Stories, Poetry, Picture Books	Novels, Various types of Fiction, Information Text, Poetry, Short Stories, Reports, Epics	Whole
Shared Reading and Writing	Teacher reads first for understanding; teacher and students reread together to develop fluency and focus on skills; teacher invites students to participate in writing a group text	Text is at/above independent reading level; big books, multiple copies of little books, anthology, poems, nursery rhymes, charts, and transparencies	Multiple copies of leveled texts, chapter books, magazine articles, or poems, charts, and transparencies	Novels, speeches, magazine articles, reports, technical manuals or poems, charts, and transparencies	Novels, speeches, magazine articles, essays, reports, technical manuals or poems, charts, and transparencies	Whole Paired Reading Literature Circles Book Discussion Groups
Small Group Instruction in Reading and Writing (Includes use of leveled text)	Teacher scaffolds and monitors children's application of phonemic awareness, decoding strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; students read at their instructional level. Students listen, discuss, read, map, and write using narrative and expository text structures. Teacher scaffolds and confers with groups or individuals during all phases of writing process.	Focus is on developing fluency (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody) and comprehension, including self-monitoring of these skills and strategies. Four modes of writing are developed: personal response to literature, expository, informational, and personal narrative.	Increased focus on comprehension and self-monitoring. Increased emphasis on using common text structures (sequence, problem/ solution, compare/contrast, cause/effect) to aid reading and writing informational text. Four modes of writing are developed: personal response to literature, expository, informational and personal narrative.	Focus on comprehension and self-monitoring across varied literary and informational text, including content-specific texts. Emphasis on using common text structures (sequence, problem/ solution, compare/contrast, cause/effect, etc) to aid reading and writing of informational text.	Focus on comprehension and self-monitoring across varied literary and informational text, including content-specific texts. Emphasis on using common text structures (sequence, problem/ solution, compare/contrast, cause/effect, etc) to aid reading and writing of informational text.	Small flexible groups Cooperative structures

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) provide explicit guidance.

Instructional Suggestions for Addressing the Areas of Reading and Writing

Component	Description	PreK-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Grouping Options
Word Study and Vocabulary Development	Students apply strategies for decoding and spelling. Teachers implicitly increase vocabulary through read alouds, engaging in daily oral language and providing ample time for extended reading. Teachers explicitly teach vocabulary initial word learning.	Students engage in a variety of hands-on activities to read and spell high frequency words; word building activities, letter tiles, word walls, making words	Word building activities, word walls, making big words, concept mapping; Focus on structural analysis	Content specific vocabulary, technical vocabulary	Content specific vocabulary, technical vocabulary	Whole group Small group Cooperative structures Individual
Independent Reading and Writing	Students self-select materials from a variety of genres, at their independent reading level; students work on all phases of the reading and writing process; teacher confers with individuals and conducts on-going assessments.	Classroom library selections, browsing boxes, books on tape, school library selections	Classroom and school library selections	Classroom and school library selections, internet selections, public libraries/bookstores	Classroom and school library selections , internet selections, public libraries/bookstores	Individual Cooperative structures

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) provide explicit guidance.

Appendix C

Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs

A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Alliance for Excellent Education's *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* identifies elements associated with improving adolescent literacy based on the most current research. A comprehensive literacy program targeted to older readers would include many of the following elements.

1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction: Instruction makes reading comprehension strategies explicit to students through modeling and explanation and gives students ample opportunities for practice.
2. Effective instructional principles embedded in content: Instruction is embedded and reinforced across content areas, with attention paid to context-specific texts and tasks.
3. Motivation and self-directed learning: Instruction promotes engagement and self-regulated learning for the development of motivated and flexible literacy skills.
4. Text-based collaborative learning: Instruction enables students to engage in guided interactions with texts in groups in order to foster learning of new knowledge.
5. Strategic tutoring: Individualized instruction is more intense for struggling readers and focuses on instilling independence.
6. Diverse texts: Students have access to, and experience with, texts at a variety of difficulty levels that vary in the styles, genres, topics, and content areas they cover.
7. Intensive writing: Instruction should integrate writing as a vehicle for learning and as a measure of comprehension and learning across content areas.
8. A technology component: Technology is used to leverage instructional time to provide additional support and practice for students as well as prepare students for the ways different technology alters the reading and writing experience.
9. Ongoing formative assessment of students: Instruction should be determined by the use of ongoing assessment of students that helps teachers target instruction.
10. Extended time for literacy: Reading and writing instruction takes place for longer than a single language arts period and is extended through integration and emphasis across curricula. Extended time may also include additional time devoted to literacy instruction, especially for learners more than two grade levels behind.
11. Professional development: Teachers participate in professional development experiences that are systematic, frequent, long-term, and ongoing to improve their ability to teach reading and writing across the curriculum.
12. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs: Students progress is monitored and tracked over the long term.

13. Teacher teams: Infrastructure supports teachers working in small, interdisciplinary teams to allow for collaboration and more consistent and coordinated instruction and professional development.
14. Leadership: Principals and administrators participate in professional development and foster teachers taking leadership roles.
15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program: Instruction encompasses all aspects of literacy in ways that allow all facets of the program to complement one another and is consistent with professional development as well as the chosen materials and approaches for learning.

(*Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy*, 2005)

Appendix D

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A CORE READING PROGRAM

Adapted from: Vogt, M.E. Shearer, B. A. "Reading Specialists in the Real World." Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 2003. 185-188.

1. What would an ideal set of reading/language arts instructional materials look like?
- Do the instructional materials have a research-based foundation for the program?
- Are there student anthologies with classic, contemporary, and multicultural literature, leveled reading books for beginning reading instruction, various types of assessments, and an easy-to-follow instructional sequence in the teacher's guide?
- Do the supplemental offerings serve to support the basic set of materials?

2. How does the scope and sequence of this program/series, grade level by grade level, stack up to your district and state standards?
- Explicit instruction, practice, and assessment in reading needs to address the five areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. How comprehensive is your program for each of these areas, across all grades levels?
- Are skills just introduced and taught once, or are they reviewed and assessed in a spiral fashion throughout the lessons, themes, and grade levels?
- Is there a logical organizational structure for the skills and strategies that are taught? If so, what does this structure look like?

3. If the publishers make claims about the effectiveness of their products in promotional materials, what kind of research evidence is available to support these contentions?
- Is there a scientific research document from the publisher that serves as the foundation for the program/series? Is it readily available?
- Is there written evidence that the materials have been field-tested with teachers and real students? If so, what did the field-testing demonstrate? When did it take place? With what groups of students? And what were the results?

4. Who are the authors of the series or program?
- Are they established educators and researchers in the field of literacy (reading)?
- What has been their role in the development of the program?
- Do they represent diverse perspectives and backgrounds?
- What is their philosophy about the reading process and instruction and is it reflected in the materials?

5. If we follow a lesson from beginning to end, how much explicit instruction and modeling is included?
- How much student practice is recommended?
- How much silent "worksheet" work is included and recommended?

- What is the balance between explicit instruction by the teacher and independent work by the student?

6. How many opportunities do students have to actually read and write about authentic topics?
- If the program claims to be "integrated," how are the language arts (i.e. spelling, writing, and grammar) taught, modeled, assessed, and practiced?

7. What provisions are included for English Language Learners (ELLs)?
- Are students provided with appropriate instruction of grade level concepts and vocabulary?
- Are the supportive activities meaningful and useful for literacy acquisition?
- Do they provide access to the same content as the English-only student is receiving?
- Is there an obvious attempt to scaffold reading instruction for ELLs?
- Is English proficiency taught and reinforced, as well as literacy skills?
- Are the ELL recommendations more substantive than just one to two sentence cursory suggestions?

8. What are the expectations of the materials regarding what children and adolescents know and can do?
- Are these expectations appropriate to your school community?
- What are the social skills and values being taught, modeled, and reinforced through the instructions plan and the literature? Are they appropriate for your school, district, and community context?
- Are the stories and other literature pieces representative of your students who will be reading them? Will the students be able to make connections to themselves and their world?
- Does the literature represent a variety of perspectives and views so that children/adolescents will have the opportunity to expand their own thinking? Are the discussions about values, ethics, and social contexts in agreement with the socio-cultural perspective of your community?

9. Are the narrative (including poetry) and informational texts well represented?
- Is there a variety of text structures and genres?
- Is there a wide enough variety of reading levels represented in the texts so that students of all reading abilities can have access to independent and instructional materials?

10. Are the provisions for struggling readers and accelerated readers appropriate and doable?
- Will teachers be able to include additional instruction and experiences for students within the daily instructional plan?
- Is careful attention paid throughout the program to motivate all learners?

11. Is the instructional plan appropriate?
- Does it activate, utilize, and develop students' background knowledge and experience?
- Is there a balance of explicit instruction and multiple opportunities for students to practice and apply what they have learned?

12. Is the instructional plan appropriate for a variety of teachers' skills, experiences, and abilities?
- Will all teachers find something they can use – whether beginning or experienced?
- Will beginning teachers have enough structure and support to be successful with the program?
- Is the plan easy to follow, comprehensive, and well designed?
- Will experienced teachers find the instructional plans helpful, but not overly prescriptive?

13. In the instructional plan, are learning goals and objectives clearly stated and then assessed?
- Does the plan ensure that students have exposure to, instruction in, practice with, and eventual mastery of the respective objectives and standards?

14. Do supplemental materials, such as workbooks, transparencies, and blackline masters support and extend instruction, while providing opportunities for meaningful independent practice?

15. Which of the supplemental materials are truly "supplemental" and which are really "necessary" for the program to run smoothly?
- If you don't purchase the supplemental materials, what will be omitted instructionally?

16. Are the pacing suggestions appropriate for your student population?
- Is there a way to "slow down" or "speed up" the instruction without incurring additional, time-consuming work for the teacher?

17. Are there extra handbooks or other resources that contain important instructional lesson plans for students needing additional support?
- For accelerated learners?
- For English Language Learners (ELL)?
- What is in these handbooks? How will they be used?
- What will happen to these students if the handbooks are overlooked by teachers or not purchased by the district?

18. What is the role of assessment?
- Is it integrated throughout the program?
- Is it viewed as an ongoing process?
- What skills are tested?

- What is the format of the assessments and other tests?
- Are there performance assessments as well as, other formats that are reflective of standardized tests?
- What is the balance of assessment formats?

19. Is there an appropriate balance between the number of pages of skills work, workbook pages, and so forth, and more authentic opportunities to respond to text?
- Look beyond the labels. Most publishers will use similar labels, such as "intervention," "scaffolded instruction," or "integration." Take a closer look at the actual instruction, rather than just accepting the label at face value.

20. Is the teacher encouraged to use a variety of grouping configurations throughout the week's plans?
- Do students have opportunities to engage in meaningful activities with partners? Small groups? The whole class?

Appendix E

PLANNING AND EVALUATION TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE LITERACY PROGRAMS

The following questions should be discussed as you plan for an effective literacy program:

1. Are your goals, objectives, and priorities clearly defined and quantified, anchored in research, prioritized in terms of importance to student learning, commonly understood by users, and consistently employed?

2. Are assessment instruments and procedures clearly specified, measuring important literacy skills, providing reliable and valid information about student performance, informing instruction in important meaningful and maintainable ways?

3. Do the instructional programs and materials have documented efficacy, drawn from research-based findings and practices, aligned with Grade Level Expectations (GLE) and Grade Span Expectations (GSE), which support a wide range of learners?

4. Is instructional time sufficient and allocated effectively?

5. Are differentiated instruction, grouping, and scheduling practices tailored to meet the needs of all students?

6. Is the district administration focused on strong instructional leadership and organizational skills, allocation of sufficient resources to support the reading program, and a communication system monitoring reading progress and best practices?

7. Is professional development available, well planned, financed, adequate, and ongoing in order to support literacy achievement?

Adapted from: Kame'enui, Edward J., Simmons, Deborah C. "Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective School-wide Reading Programs," IDEA, Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement, College of Education, University of Oregon. Spring, 2000. Appendix

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